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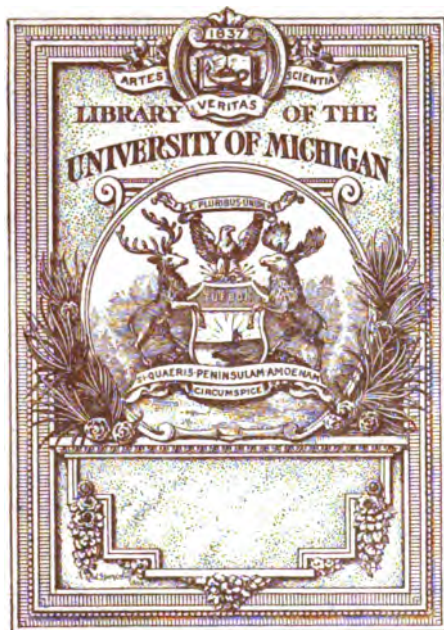
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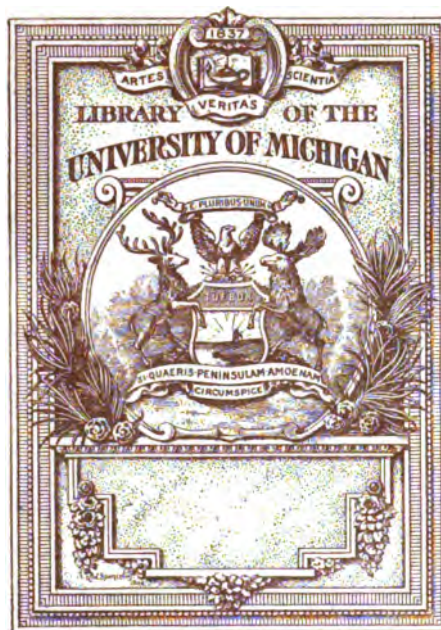
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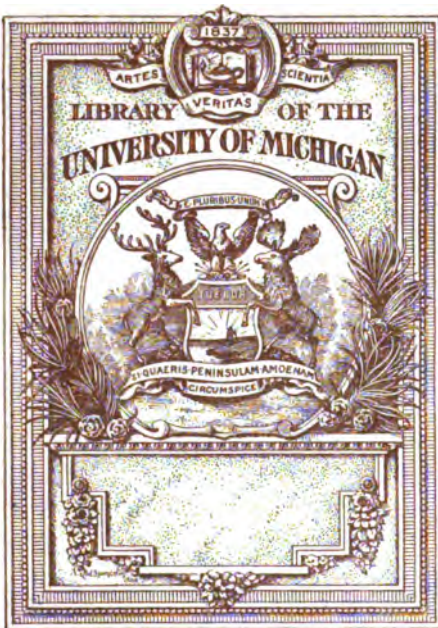
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BORDER BALLADS

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WITH AN INTRODUCTORY

ESSAY BY ANDREW LANG

AND TWELVE ETCHINGS

BY C. O. MURRAY

LONDON: LAWRENCE AND BULLEN
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1895

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PREFACE

THE origin and date of the more ancient European ballads, and of the Scottish ballads, which are but an important element in the general mass, have puzzled all inquirers. Ballad-collecting, in England, began to be fashionable under the Restoration, but the pieces collected were cheap popular leaflets. No questions of date and origin were raised, and, when oral versions began to be written down, altered, edited, and published, as by Allan Ramsay and Bishop Percy, the ballads were generally attributed to 'the old minstrels.' The hypothesis was vague enough. It was known that 'minstrels,' whether settled in noble houses, or wandering at adventure, had existed. Their poems were not easily to be found, and, on the other side, here were the ballads, poems with no known authors,—'masterless,' as the Greeks said. The inference was that the masters without songs had composed the songs without masters.

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The first hints which led to a comparative study of the topic were given when the Danish and other Scandinavian popular ballads, with those of France, Brittany, Italy, Modern Greece, Finland, and other European countries, began to be published, at the end of the last, and throughout the present century. It was soon seen that the popular orally preserved poems of Europe closely resembled each other in style, in recurring formulæ, in ideas and superstitious beliefs, and even in sequence of incident and plots: though here very close resemblances are not common. The conclusion is that popular poetry, in Europe at least, is only a branch of folk-lore in general. The causes which account for the striking analogies between the *Märchen*, or popular tales of the world, must also account for the common features in the ballads of Europe. There is first a store of common ideas, beliefs, superstitions, and simple conventions in expression. Then some sequence of incidents, some story plot, probably attracted, in one country, or in several, the attention of some unknown singer, or singers. One poetical

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version had merit enough to survive in the general memory, and was transmitted from place to place, in the course of commerce, war, and travel. We know that songs and dances, or corroborees, are thus transmitted among the natives of Australia, in spite of the diversities of language which prevail. In the same way a successful and taking ballad, dealing with universally diffused ideas, superstitions, and customs, or with romantic incidents of universal interest, might easily spread all over Europe. Retained only in memory, and subject to the caprice of singers or reciters, themselves poets in their way, a ballad would come to present many variants, even in a single country, and would undergo great changes in countries widely divided from each other.

Again, it might easily happen that kindred but varying versions of the same *Märchen*, or traditional popular tale, would be independently versified in distant lands,—in Norway and in Portugal, for example. It seems certain that in Europe, as also in Africa, there existed a class of oral compositions in which verse

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and prose occur alternately, as they do now in some entertainments of the music-halls. The celebrated *Cante-fable* of *Aucassin and Nicolette* is the only old literary example of this form which survives. Jamieson in *Illustrations of Northern Antiquities* (p. 379), and Motherwell in his *Minstrelsy* (p. xv), give two popular examples of the *Cante-fable* in alternate verse and prose from Scandinavian and Scottish sources. Manifestly, in some cases, the verse might well degenerate into prose, when we should have a *Märchen*, or the prose might be versified, as time went on, when we should have a ballad. The authors might either be professional wandering *jongleurs* or rural amateurs, such as Hogg would have been had the Shepherd never learned to read and write.

The stock of common conventional formulæ made ballad composition easy, to a man of some fancy. The fittest ballads would survive in general recollection, as we have said, and the mannerisms of the ballad were perpetuated, after education became more widely diffused, and found a place in such more recent compositions

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as the ballads on events in the history of the Covenanters.

Thus considered, the analogies of topic, style, and plot in the ballads of Europe cease to seem so very perplexing. Again, the very high relative merit of Scottish ballads, as compared with English, may partly be explained by the more romantic character of a mountain-dwelling people, partly by the circumstance that the Scottish ballads were collected from oral recitation, while those of England, collected from published leaflets, had passed into print through the deadening hands of the very lowest literary hacks. Once printed, as Hogg's mother said to Scott, a ballad ceases to be remembered and handed down in oral tradition. Fortunately Scott, and others, came in time, before the 'lively tradition' of the Border had expired.

These points may be illustrated, by aid of the erudition of Professor Child of Harvard, from the pieces in this collection.*

* See Mr. Child's *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*. This vast collection, with all known variants, derived from manuscript sources, is still incomplete, and is being published in numbers. Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Boston, U.S.

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If we examine *Clerk Saunders*, we find that it was first printed by Scott in the *Border Minstrelsy* (1802) from Mr. Herd's manuscripts. In some versions there is an addition from another ballad source, 'Sweet William's Ghost.' In Boccaccio's time there was an analogous Italian ballad: the ghost of a lover, murdered by his mistress's brothers, appears to her and reveals the crime. The apparition of the ghost, in the poem as printed by Scott, is a decided improvement on the ghostless ballad. There are Scandinavian, Spanish, Portuguese, and Illyrian variants on the theme: the lady is sometimes a married woman. The version by Scott is now classical, and it must be confessed that it has been vastly improved in the hands of that great poet. Yet other traditional versions have picturesque touches, as in Margaret's dream of dipping her yellow hair in wells of blood, which Scott did not know or omitted. In a north-country variant (Kinloch) a trace of Catholic tradition survives:—

'Man sall never comfort me,
Ye'll marrie me wi' the Queen o' Heaven,
For man sall never enjoy me.'

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The hold of the Church was, and indeed in some districts is, much stronger in Northern than in Southern Scotland.

On the whole, this ballad very well illustrates the diverse European modes of fashioning one romantic situation into a popular poem, with the local variants, and the final stamp of a great literary artist's hand. Oddly enough, most European forms preserve, in tragic shape, the excuses for a lover's presence which are treated with comic effect in the Scottish song 'Hame cam oor gudeman at e'en.' The austerities contemplated by Margaret occur in many European ballads with different plots. They do not occur in Sir Walter's version. In fact they are formulæ which may be added in any tragic ballad, or withheld, according to the taste and fancy of the writer.

Turning to *The Wife of Usher's Well*, we find Scott announcing it as a fragment, never previously published; it was derived from the recitation of an old woman in West Lothian. There is a variant collected by James (Robert?) Chambers from the recitation of his grand-

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mother, who had it seventy years earlier from a Peeblesshire woman. The motive of this mysteriously beautiful poem is, as Scott observes, the same as that of Bürger's *Lenore* (itself derived from tradition), and, we may add, as that of the English *Suffolk Tragedy*, and the ghostly Romaic ballad of *The Dead Foster-Brother*, in Fauriæl's collection. The impiety of excessive grief disturbs the dead, but the sons of the Wife of Usher's Well do not carry her away with them, as in the other European poems. The birch 'by the gates of Paradise' is elsewhere unknown.

To *Tamlane* Scott devoted a long introduction, full of the lore of fairyland. The fairy superstition, in one shape or another, is of world-wide diffusion, as far as regards the belief in minor spiritual beings of waste, and wood, and well. The Greeks, ancient and modern, have their Nereids; Samoans and Kanakas (as Mr. Stevenson and Mr. Atkinson have ascertained) know the amorous and fatal fairy ladies as well as the Highlanders do. The Rev. Mr. Kirk, in his *Secret Commonwealth* (1691, edited by Scott, 1815),

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11 dilates on fairies, and the 'inconvenience' of their amours. In Scotland, as in England to some extent, the fairies were mixed up with the king and queen of the pre-Christian Hades, answering to Pluto and Proserpine. Fairyland is really the place of departed spirits of men who died strangely, or vanished. Maitland of Lethington was seen there by a poor Scottish woman who was burned as a witch. Living men may occasionally return out of fairyland, like Tamlane in this ballad, and like Thomas the Rhymer; but the Rev. Robert Kirk of Aberfoyle (according to popular legend) never returned: the proper rites of emancipation were neglected. This fairy belief lasted, on the Border, till the time of the writer's grandfather, and is said not to be extinct in Wales. A craving for Christian company marks these austerer and more sombre fairies, who are distinct from the frivolous Pixies of Devonshire.

The belief in fairies is probably a thing of many elements. Some of these possibly came from traditions of a prehistoric race, dwelling in subterranean homes: now the 'Fairy-knowes.'

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Again, the fairies blend with the shades of the ancestral dead. Once more the hallucinations even of modern and educated children (as of Mr. Baring-Gould in early boyhood) might originate, or at least strengthen, the fairy creed. Further, in many districts the real or fancied phenomena of spiritualism are attributed to fairy agency.* The fairies of folklore bear marks of all these different original conceptions, and the belief in them is so far from being extinct, that persons of honour, known to the author, have heard 'fairy music' on a fairy hill in Lochaber. The origin of the sounds is at present unexplained, but, whatever the cause, the music keeps alive the tradition. The fairies of *Tamlane* seem to be derived from the pre-Christian ancestral shades. The queen is another Eurydice. They are tributary to the ecclesiastical inferno: 'we pay the kane to hell.' In *Thomas the Rhymer*, fairyland is also a mid-region, a kind of Limbo, neither heaven, hell, nor purgatory. The superstition of Scot-

* See the author's Introduction to Kirk's *Secret Commonwealth* (Nutt: London, 1893), where examples are given.

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tish Presbyterianism regarded the fairies as allies of the devil and of witchcraft, as active in causing second sight, and men and women were freely burned for being under 'phairie control.' In Sutherland, fairies lately caused the phenomenon of 'levitation,' or the uplifting of a living human body in the air, as also in Argyllshire.* The analogous Mrarts and Brewin produce the same effect among Australian blacks.

This brief summary shows the wide diffusion of the fairy belief. Hence it seems rather curious that, while the belief is everywhere, no ballad on the belief, analogous to *Tamlane*, occurs outside of Scotland, or rather, is known to occur. The transformations of Tamlane, which end when he is firmly held, are, on the other hand, as old as the story of Proteus, in the Fourth Book of the *Odyssey*. The instance of Thetis and Peleus is familiar, and there are Scandinavian and modern Cretan examples. The dipping of the recovered Tamlane in milk and in water has analogues in

* Islay mentions this in his *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*, and the present writer heard of a case in Ross-shire, from an excellent angler there.

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India, among the Hottentots, in ancient Egypt, and in Albania.*

In spite of this community of ideas, the ballad story stands alone. Scott mentions it as popular in Ettrick Forest. The scene, Carterhaugh, is a 'haugh' at the junction of Ettrick and Yarrow. The tale was certainly known as early as the middle of the sixteenth century, being mentioned in the *Complaynt of Scotland* (1549). Burns, in 1792, contributed a version to Johnson's *Museum*, and in this piece Carterhaugh is the scene. Burns may have procured it in his visit to Selkirk. It does not exhibit the weak modern lines which Scott allowed to stand:—

'Their oaten pipes blew wondrous shrill,'

and so forth. Scott calls them 'verses of no common merit,' though 'the diction is of a somewhat modern cast.' Sir Walter was always too kindly as a critic. He got the stanzas from a gentleman residing near Langholm. He also used a Glenriddel ms. There exists a number of other variants, and the name of Carterhaugh is

* See *Les Deux Frères* in M. Maspero's *Contes Egyptiens*, p. 22.

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altered to Kirston's haugh, Chesters haugh, and so on. This remarkably picturesque and spirited ballad has, apparently, no connection with some English lines of a comic sort about Tom o' the Linn, or Tomlin.

The Twa Corbies, on the other hand (communicated by Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, 'from tradition, as written down by a lady'), is certainly the same poem as *The Three Ravens*, in Ravenscroft's *Melismata* (1611). The *Corbies* are 'rather a counterpart than a copy,' says Sir Walter. The lady is faithful in England—

'God send every gentleman
Such hawks, such hounds, and such a leman,'

whereas hawks, hounds, and lemans are all faithless in Scotland. The problem as to comparative antiquity is probably unsolvable. We might imagine the two pieces to have been composed on a topic given in some contest of bards. One treats it in a spirit of loyal faith, the other in a mood of bitter tragedy.

'O'er his white banes, when they are bare,
The wind sall blaw for evermair.'

The picture, in the Scottish version, is wonder-

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fully vivid : the turf wall (fail dyke), behind it the knight slain in some Border feud, and the converse of the two black boding corbies. Many such a spectacle may have met the poet's eyes on the desolate Border moors.

The learning about that popular prophet, Thomas the Rhymer, is almost bewildering in amount. 'Thomas Rymor de Ercildune' (now Earlston, where stands a wall of his tower, or of a later building on the site) was a real person, and witnessed a deed, undated, but probably not later than 1230-40. This is, however, a little dubious, as two Thomas Rymors appear, and our hero is said to have predicted the death of Alexander III. in 1286. A prediction of his is mentioned in a MS. dated before 1320. Robert Mannyng speaks of him as a poet, in 1338, and about 1350 he is referred to as an authority on the history of Sir Tristram. His rhymed oracles, as on Bannockburn, were remembered and applied, not only in the 'Forty-five (to Glads-muir or Prestonpans), but when a French invasion was expected in the beginning of this century. There are several copies of an old

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English poem on Thomas (*circ.* 1450), referring to an older 'story,' which if it existed, may have been by Thomas himself. In the older 'story' the specific prophecies were probably absent. The existing ballad is thus based on earlier romance. The ballad omits amorous details of Thomas's passages with the Fairy Queen, which are unshrinkingly supplied in the English romantic poem. The Fairy Queen thereafter loses all her beauty; her golden hair is fairy gold. The cynical conclusion is out of tone and keeping. Thomas's power of prophecy was due to 'phairie control': 'How he wist it was ferly,' says Wyntoun, Prior of St. Serf's, in his *Chronicle*. Summoned by two white deer, he went back to Fairyland, whence, like Arthur, Ogier, and many others, he is to return in the hour of Scotland's need. He has often been sorely needed! The Rhymer's Glen runs through Scott's estate of Abbotsford, debouching at Chiefswood, Lockhart's cottage. Whether the Bogle Burn is the burn of that glen the author wotteth not, but deems it probable. Hard by is a Holy Well, still resorted to by Catholics. Scott added (in the *Border Min-*

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strelsy) a very spirited ballad of the prophecies attributed to Thomas. These are either sagacious guesses (as to the building of bridges, for instance), or are too dark for comprehension, or were compiled after the event. Scott ends, concerning James VI. :—

‘The waters worship shall his race,
Likewise the waves of the farthest sea,
For they shall ride over ocean wide,
With hempen bridle, and horse of tree.’

The Douglas Tragedy is a ballad localised on Douglas Burn, a tributary of Yarrow, where stands the ruined tower of Blackhouse. Seven large stones on the height mark the spot where the seven brothers were slain. The farm was tenanted by the father of Scott’s friend and amanuensis, William Laidlaw. The St. Marie’s Kirk was probably that which stood by St. Mary’s Loch, the source of Yarrow. Though so thoroughly localised, this picturesque ballad has a Scandinavian variant, and may, therefore, possess no historical foundation of fact.

Edom o’ Gordon, on the other hand, is historical, not romantic, and not of wide diffusion. The hero was Adam Gordon of Auchindoun, brother

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of the Marquis of Huntly. Towie Castle, which held for Queen Mary, was burned, in 1571, by his retainer, one Ker. The House o' the Rhodes is near Gordon, in Berwickshire, and has been introduced by some mistaken Border reciter. This is Aytoun's theory: the facts have clearly been recast in popular imagination.

Sir Roland is a ballad of Motherwell's collection, and its authenticity has not escaped discussion. The present writer acknowledges his inability to decide the question on internal evidence, but a want of proportion in the narrative leads him to suspect that Motherwell's 'ingenious friend' supplied an ingenious imitation.

The Demon Lover (so named by a quotation from Coleridge's *Kubla Khan*) was supplied to Scott, from recitation, by his friend Willie Laidlaw. The legend, according to Sir Walter, is current in various shapes in Scotland. Motherwell gives a ruder form, and Buchan prints a form in which the lover is the ghost of James Herries. Whatever may be genuine in Laidlaw's piece, the second verse from the close is undeniably spurious.

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The Twa Sisters of Binnorie has a huge bibliography. A published broadside of 1650 is known. The ballad also occurs in various Miscellanies of the seventeenth century. Scott's is a made-up copy, and the refrain is found in neither of the texts which he worked on. There are numerous Scandinavian and Slavonic, and even Finnish and Lithuanian, forms of the story, while the talking harp made out of the dead girl's bones has analogues among the Bechuanas and the Chinese. The broadside English version is, of course, vulgar :—

'What did he do with her two shins?
Upon the viol they danced *Moll Sym's*.

.
And then bespake the strings all three,
O yonder is my sister that drowned me.
Now pay the miller for his pain,
And let him be gone in the devil's name,'

and so forth. The Miller, in England, takes the rôle of the Harper in the North. The English Muse of the broadside never touched a ballad except to spoil it.

Fair Annie of Lochroyan, in Scott, is a com-

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pound thing. He used a copy collected by a Mr. Brown, adding verses from Herd's mss., out of two variants. A coherent account of the tragedy can scarcely be obtained, and in some variants occur formulæ from ballads of a very different character.

Helen of Kirkconnell is rather a 'lyric cry' than a ballad. The lady was the daughter of the laird of Kirkconnell, who in 1745 was a Maxwell, and out with the Prince. Fair Helen, of an earlier time, was either a Bell or an Irving; one or other house was dispossessed by the Maxwells in 1600. Fleming of Kirkpatrick was the favoured but unfortunate lover; the name of the murderer (whose addresses were encouraged by the family) is unknown. Fleming is said to have slain his man on the spot; in another tradition he pursues the murderer to Spain, and kills him in Madrid. A cairn of stones marks the scene of the murder; the lover is buried in the kirkyard of Kirkconnell, near Springkell. Burns, for some reason, despised this tender poem: Wordsworth did worse—he re-told the tale in verses of almost preternatural badness:—

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'Proud Gordon cannot bear the thoughts
That through his brain are travelling,
And, starting up, to Bruce's heart
He launched a deadly javelin(g).'

Afterwards Bruce (why Bruce?) fled to Spain,

'And fought with rage incessant
Against the Moorish crescent.'

Nothing can possibly be worse than this doggerel,
and it is perhaps to be desired that English poets
should leave Scottish ballads alone.

In these remarks it has been thought well
to note the antiquarian and historical side of
a few fragments of *volks-lieder*, leaving to the
artist the illustration of their picturesque aspects.
Their poetical beauties have often been dilated
upon, but their direct and simple appeal to the
primary emotions, their frank handling of the
obviously romantic, their fresh and vivid nature,
demand no aid from 'sign-post criticism.' From
these ballads, and such as these, Scott caught
the inspiration which informed his dreamy child-
hood, and, to the last, he never wearied of re-
peating his Northern cradle-songs. Of such
ballads, so often commented upon, praise is
superfluous, and not to feel and recognise their

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abundant merits is to display an incapacity for poetic emotion. The influence of the ballads on the restoration of romance again has long been a commonplace of literary criticism, and it is universally acknowledged that the old ballad-mongers were guides who led an artificial Muse back to nature and to simplicity. In our own age the ballads have been imitated, with varying success, by poets rather artistic than simple, such as Mr. Rossetti. These authors have never approached the merit of the Ballad of the Red Harlaw, placed by Scott in the mouth of Elspeth of the Burn-foot, in *The Antiquary*.

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THOMAS THE RHYMER



THOMAS THE RHYMER

TRUE Thomas lay on Huntlie bank ;
A ferlie he spied wi' his e'e ;
And there he saw a lady bright,
Come riding down by the Eildon Tree.

Her skirt was o' the grass-green silk,
Her mantle o' the velvet fyne,
At ilka tett of her horse's mane
Hang fifty siller bells and nine.

True Thomas he pull'd aff his cap,
And louted low down to his knee :
'All hail, thou mighty Queen of Heaven !
For thy peer on earth I never did see.'

'O no, O no, Thomas,' she said,
'That name does not belang to me ;
I am but the Queen of fair Elfland,
That am hither come to visit thee.

'Harp and carp, Thomas,' she said,
'Harp and carp, along wi' me,
And if ye dare to kiss my lips,
Sure of your bodie I will be !'

THOMAS THE RHYMER

'Betide me weal, betide me woe,
That weird shall never daunt me ;
Syne he has kiss'd her rosy lips,
All underneath the Eildon Tree.

'Now, ye maun go wi' me,' she said,
'True Thomas, ye maun go wi' me.
And ye maun serve me seven years,
Thro' weal or woe as may chance to be.'

She mounted on her milk-white steed,
She's ta'en True Thomas up behind,
And aye, whene'er her bridle rung,
The steed flew swifter than the wind.

O they rade on, and farther on—
The steed gaed swifter than the wind—
Until they reach'd a desart wide,
And living land was left behind.

'Light down, light down, now, True Thomas,
And lean your head upon my knee ;
Abide and rest a little space,
And I will shew you ferlies three.

'O see ye not yon narrow road,
So thick beset with thorns and briers ?
That is the path of righteousness,
Tho' after it but few enquires.

THOMAS THE RHYMER

'And see not ye that braid braid road,
That lies across that lily leven?
That is the path of wickedness,
Tho' some call it the road to heaven.

'And see not ye that bonny road,
That winds about the fernie brae?
That is the road to fair Elfland,
Where thou and I this night maun gae.

'But, Thomas, ye maun hold your tongue,
Whatever ye may hear or see,
For, if you speak word in Elfyn land,
Ye'll ne'er get back to your ain countrie.'

O they rade on, and farther on,
And they waded thro' rivers aboon the knee,
And they saw neither sun nor moon,
But they heard the roaring of the sea.

It was mirk mirk night, and there was nae stern light,
And they waded thro' red blude to the knee;
For a' the blude that's shed on earth
Rins thro' the springs o' that countrie.

Syne they came on to a garden green,
And she pu'd an apple frae a tree:
'Take this for thy wages, True Thomas,
It will give the tongue that can never lie.'

THOMAS THE RHYMER

'My tongue is mine ain,' True Thomas said,
 'A gudely gift ye wad gie to me!
I neither dought to buy nor sell,
 At fair or tryst where I may be.

'I dought neither speak to prince or peer,
 Nor ask of grace from fair ladye.'
'Now hold thy peace,' the lady said,
 'For as I say, so must it be.'

He has gotten a coat of the even cloth,
 And a pair of shoes of velvet green,
And till seven years were gane and past
 True Thomas on earth was never seen.

TAMLANE



T A M L A N E

O I FORBID you, maidens a',
That wear gowd on your hair,
To come or gae by Carterhaugh,
For young Tam Lin is there.

There's nane that gaes by Carterhaugh
But they leave him a wad,
Either their rings, or green mantles,
Or else their maidenhead.

Janet has kilted her green kirtle
A little aboon her knee,
And she has braided her yellow hair
A little aboon her bree,
And she's awa' to Carterhaugh,
As fast as she can hie.

When she came to Carterhaugh
Tam Lin was at the well,
And there she fand his steed standing,
But away was himsel.

T A M L A N E

She had na pu'd a double rose,
A rose but only twa,
Till up then started young Tam Lin,
Says, 'Lady, thou's pu nae mae.

'Why pu's thou the rose, Janet,
And why breaks thou the wand?
Or why comes thou to Carterhaugh
Withoutten my command?'

'Carterhaugh, it is my ain,
My daddie gave it me;
I'll come and gang by Carterhaugh,
And ask nae leave at thee.'

Janet has kilted her green kirtle
A little aboon her knee,
And she has snooded her yellow hair
A little aboon her bree,
And she is to her father's ha',
As fast as she can hie.

Four and twenty ladies fair
Were playing at the ba',
And out then cam' the fair Janet,
Ance the flower amang them a'.

T A M L A N E

Four and twenty ladies fair
Were playing at the chess,
And out then cam' the fair Janet,
As green as onie grass.

Out then spak an auld grey knight,
Lay o'er the castle wa',
And says, 'Alas, fair Janet, for thee
But we'll be blamèd a'.

'Haud your tongue, ye auld-faced knight,
Some ill death may ye die !
Father my bairn on whom I will,
I'll father nane on thee.'

Out then spak her father dear,
And he spak meek and mild ;
'And ever alas, sweet Janet,' he says,
'I think thou gaes wi' child.'

'If that I gae wi' child, father,
Mysel maun bear the blame ;
There's ne'er a laird about your ha'
Shall get the bairn's name.

'If my love were an earthly knight,
As he's an elfin grey,
I wadna gie my ain true-love
For nae lord that ye hae.

T A M L A N E

' The steed that my true-love rides on
Is lighter than the wind ;
Wi' siller he is shod before
Wi' burning gowd behind.'

Janet has kilted her green kirtle
A little aboon her knee,
And she has snooded her yellow hair
A little aboon her bree,
And she's awa' to Carterhaugh,
As fast as she can hie.

When she cam' to Carterhaugh,
Tam Lin was at the well,
And there she fand his steed standing,
But away was himsel.

She had na pu'd a double rose,
A rose but only twa,
Till up then started young Tam Lin,
Says, ' Lady, thou pu's nae mae.

' Why pu's thou the rose, Janet,
Amang the groves sae green,
And a' to kill the bonnie babe
That we gat us between ?'

T A M L A N E

‘ O tell me, tell me, Tam Lin,’ she says,
‘ For’s sake that died on tree,
If e’er ye was in holy chapel,
Or Christendom did see ?’

‘ Roxburgh he was my grandfather,
Took me with him to bide,
And ance it fell upon a day
That wae did me betide.

‘ And ance it fell upon a day,
A cauld day and a snell,
When we were frae the hunting come,
That frae my horse I fell ;
The Queen o’ Fairies she caught me,
In yon green hill to dwell.

‘ And pleasant is the fairy land,
But, an eerie tale to tell,
Aye at the end of seven years
We pay a teind to hell ;
I am sae fair and fu’ o’ flesh
I ’m fear’d it be mysel.

‘ But the night is Halloween, lady,
The morn is Hallowday ;
Then win me, win me, an ye will,
For weel I wat ye may.

T A M L A N E

‘ Just at the mirk and midnight hour
The fairy folk will ride,
And they that wad their true-love win,
At Miles Cross they maun bide.’

‘ But how shall I thee ken, Tam Lin,
Or how my true-love know,
Amang sae mony unco knights
The like I never saw?’

‘ O first let pass the black, lady,
And syne let pass the brown,
But quickly run to the milk-white steed,
Pu’ ye his rider down.

‘ For I’ll ride on the milk-white steed,
And aye nearest the town ;
Because I was an earthly knight
They gie me that renown.

‘ My right hand will be gloved, lady,
My left hand will be bare,
Cockt up shall my bonnet be,
And kaim’d down shall my hair ;
And thae’s the takens I gie thee,
Nae doubt I will be there.

‘ They’ll turn me in your arms, lady,
Into an ask and adder ;
But hold me fast, and fear me not,
I am your bairn’s father.

T A M L A N E

' They 'll turn me to a bear sae grim,
And then a lion bold ;
But hold me fast, and fear me not,
As ye sall love your child.

' Again they 'll turn me in your arms
To a red het gaud of airn ;
But hold me fast, and fear me not,
I 'll do to you nae harm.

' And last they 'll turn me in your arms
Into the burning gleed ;
Then throw me into well water,
O throw me in wi' speed.

' And then I 'll be your ain true-love,
I 'll turn a naked knight ;
Then cover me wi' your green mantle,
And cover me out o' sight.'

Gloomy, gloomy was the night,
And eerie was the way,
As fair Jenny in her green mantle
To Miles Cross she did gae.

About the middle o' the night
She heard the bridles ring ;
This lady was as glad at that
As any earthly thing.

T A M L A N E

First she let the black pass by,
And syne she let the brown ;
But quickly she ran to the milk-white steed,
And pu'd the rider down.

Sae weel she minded whae he did say,
And young Tam Lin did win ;
Syne cover'd him wi' her green mantle,
As blythe's a bird in spring.

Out then spak the Queen o' Fairies,
Out of a bush o' broom :
'Them that has gotten young Tam Lin
Has gotten a stately groom.'

Out then spak the Queen o' Fairies,
And an angry woman was she :
'Shame betide her ill-far'd face,
And an ill death may she die,
For she's taen awa' the bonniest knight
In a' my companie.

'But had I kend, Tam Lin,' she says,
'What now this night I see,
I wad hae taen out thy twa grey e'en,
And put in twa e'en o' tree.'

THE WIFE OF USHER'S WELL



THE WIFE OF USHER'S WELL

THERE lived a wife at Usher's Well,
And a wealthy wife was she ;
She had three stout and stalwart sons,
And sent them o'er the sea.

They hadna been a week from her,
A week but barely ane,
When word came to the carline wife,
That her three sons were gane.

They hadna been a week from her,
A week but barely three,
When word came to the carline wife,
That her sons she'd never see.

'I wish the wind may never cease,
Nor fish be in the flood,
Till my three sons come hame to me,
In earthly flesh and blood!'

THE WIFE OF USHER'S WELL

It fell about the Martinmas,
When nights are lang and mirk,
The carline wife's three sons came hame,
And their hats were o' the birk.

It neither grew in syke nor ditch,
Nor yet in ony sheugh ;
But at the gates o' Paradise
That birk grew fair eneugh.

'Blow up the fire, my maidens !
Bring water from the well !
For a' my house sall feast this night,
Since my three sons are well.'

And she has made to them a bed,
She's made it large and wide ;
And she's ta'en her mantle her about,
Sat down at the bedside.

Up then crew the red red cock,
And up and crew the gray ;
The eldest to the youngest said,
'Tis time we were away.'

The cock he hadna craw'd but once,
And clapp'd his wings at a',
Whan the youngest to the eldest said,
' Brother, we must awa.

THE WIFE OF USHER'S WELL

' The cock doth craw, the day doth daw,
The channerin' worm doth chide ;
Gin we be mist out o' our place,
A sair pain we maun bide.

' Fare-ye-weel, my mother dear !
Fareweel to barn and byre !
And fare-ye-weel, the bonny lass
That kindles my mother's fire.'

.

CLERK SAUNDERS



CLERK SAUNDERS

CLERK SAUNDERS and may Margaret
Walk'd ower yon garden green ;
And sad and heavy was the love
That fell thir twa between.

'A bed, a bed,' Clerk Saunders said,
'A bed for you and me !'
'Fye na, fye na,' said may Margaret,
'Till anes we married be.

'For in may come my seven bauld brothers,
Wi' torches burning bright ;
They 'll say,—“We hae but ae sister,
And behold she 's wi' a knight !”'

'Then take the sword frae my scabbard,
And slowly lift the pin ;
And you may swear, and save your aith,
Ye never let Clerk Saunders in.

'And take a napkin in your hand,
And tie up baith your bonny e'en,
And you may swear, and save your aith,
Ye saw me na since late yestreen.'

CLERK SAUNDERS

It was about the midnight hour,
When they asleep were laid,
When in and came her seven brothers,
Wi' torches burning red.

When in and came her seven brothers,
Wi' torches shining bright :
They said, ' We hae but ae sister,
And behold her lying with a knight !'

Then out and spake the first o' them,
' I bear the sword shall gar him die !'
And out and spake the second o' them,
' His father has nae mair than he !'

And out and spake the third o' them,
' I wot that they are lovers dear !'
And out and spake the fourth o' them,
' They hae been in love this mony a year !'

Then out and spake the fifth o' them,
' It were great sin true love to twain !'
And out and spake the sixth o' them,
' It were shame to slay a sleeping man !'

Then up and gat the seventh o' them,
And never a word spake he ;
But he has striped his bright brown brand
Out through Clerk Saunders' fair bodye.

CLERK SAUNDERS

Clerk Saunders he started, and Margaret she turn'd
 Into his arms as asleep she lay ;
And sad and silent was the night
 That was atween thir twae.

And they lay still and sleepèd sound
 Until the day began to daw ;
And kindly to him she did say,
 ' It is time, true love, you were awa'.'

But he lay still, and sleepèd sound,
 Albeit the sun began to sheen ;
She look'd atween her and the wa',
 And dull and drowsie were his e'en.

Then in and came her father dear ;
 Said, ' Let a' your mourning be :
I 'll carry the dead corpse to the clay,
 And I 'll come back and comfort thee.'

' Comfort weel your seven sons ;
 For comforted will I never be :
I ween 'twas neither knave nor loon
 Was in the bower last night wi' me.'

The clinking bell gaed through the town,
 To carry the dead corse to the clay ;
And Clerk Saunders stood at may Margaret's window,
 I wot, an hour before the day.

CLERK SAUNDERS

'Are ye sleeping, Margaret?' he says,
'Or are ye waking presentlie?
Give me my faith and troth again,
I wot, true love, I gied to thee.'

'Your faith and troth ye sall never get,
Nor our true love sall never twin,
Until ye come within my bower,
And kiss me cheik and chin.'

'My mouth it is full cold, Margaret,
It has the smell, now, of the ground;
And if I kiss thy comely mouth,
Thy days of life will not be lang.

'O, cocks are crowing a merry midnight,
I wot the wild fowls are boding day;
Give me my faith and troth again,
And let me fare me on my way.'

'Thy faith and troth thou sall na get,
And our true love sall never twin,
Until ye tell what comes of women,
I wot, who die in strong traivelling?'

'Their beds are made in the heavens high,
Down at the foot of our good Lord's knee,
Weel set about wi' gillyflowers:
I wot, sweet company for to see.

CLERK SAUNDERS

'O, cocks are crowing a merry midnight,
I wot the wild fowl are boding day ;
The psalms of heaven will soon be sung,
And I, ere now, will be miss'd away.'

Then she has ta'en a crystal wand,
And she has stroken her troth thereon ;
She has given it him out at the shot-window,
Wi' mony a sad sigh, and heavy groan.

'I thank ye, Marg'ret ; I thank ye, Marg'ret
And aye I thank ye heartilie ;
Gin ever the dead come for the quick,
Be sure, Marg'ret, I'll come for thee.'

It's hosen and shoon, and gown alone,
She climb'd the wall, and follow'd him
Until she came to the green forest,
And there she lost the sight o' him.

'Is there ony room at your head, Saunders ?
Is there ony room at your feet ?
Is there ony room at your side, Saunders,
Where fain, fain I wad sleep ?'

'There's nae room at my head, Marg'ret,
There's nae room at my feet ;
My bed it is full lowly now :
Amang the hungry worms I sleep.

CLERK SAUNDERS

‘ Cauld mould is my covering now,
But and my winding-sheet ;
The dew it falls nae sooner down
Than my resting-place is weat.

‘ But plait a wand o’ bonnie birk,
And lay it on my breast ;
And shed a tear upon my grave,
And wish my saul gude rest.

‘ And fair Marg’ret, and rare Marg’ret,
And Marg’ret o’ veritie,
Gin ere ye love another man,
Ne’er love him as ye did me.’

Then up and crew the milk-white cock,
And up and crew the gray ;
Her lover vanish’d in the air,
And she gaed weeping away.

SIR ROLAND



SIR ROLAND

WHAN he cam to his ain luve's bouir
He tirl'd at the pin,
And sae ready was his fair fause luve
To rise and let him in.

'O welcome, welcome, Sir Roland,' she says,
'Thrice welcome thou art to me,
For this night thou wilt feast in my secret bouir,
And to-morrow we'll wedded be.'

'This night is Hallow-eve,' he said,
'And to-morrow is Hallow-day ;
And I dream'd a drearie dream yestreen,
That has made my heart fu' wae.

'I dream'd a drearie dream yestreen,
And I wish it may cum to gude :
I dream'd that ye slew my best grew hound,
And gied me his lapper'd blude.'

SIR ROLAND

'Unbuckle your belt, Sir Roland,' she said,
'And set you safely down.'
'O your chamber is very dark, fair maid,
And the night is wondrous lown.'

'Yes, dark dark is my secret bouir,
And lown the midnight may be ;
For there is none waking in a' this tower
But thou, my true love, and me.'

.
She has mounted on her true love's steed,
By the ae light o' the moon ;
She has whipped him and spurred him,
And roundly she rade frae the toun.

She hadna ridden a mile o' gate,
Never a mile but ane,
Whan she was aware of a tall young man,
Slow riding o'er the plain.

She turn'd her to the right about,
Then to the left turn'd she ;
But aye 'tween her and the wan moonlight,
That tall knight did she see.

And he was riding burd alane,
On a horse as black as jet,
But tho' she follow'd him fast and fell,
No nearer could she get.

SIR ROLAND

'O stop! O stop! young man,' she said;
'For I in dule am dight;
O stop, and win a fair lady's luve,
If you be a leal true knight.'

But nothing did the tall knight say,
And nothing did he blin;
Still slowly rode he on before
And fast she rade behind.

She whipp'd her steed, she spurr'd her steed,
Till his breast was all a foam;
But nearer unto that tall young knight,
By our Ladye she could not come.

'O if you be a gay young knight,
As well I trow you be,
Pull tight your bridle reins, and stay
Till I come up to thee.'

But nothing did that tall knight say,
And no whit did he blin,
Until he reach'd a broad river's side
And there he drew his rein.

'O is this water deep?' he said,
'As it is wondrous dun?
Or is it sic as a saikless maid,
And a leal true knight may swim?'

SIR ROLAND

‘The water it is deep,’ she said,
‘As it is wondrous dun ;
But it is sic as a saikless maid,
And a leal true knight may swim.’

The knight spurr’d on his tall black steed ;
The lady spurr’d on her brown ;
And fast they rade unto the flood,
And fast they baith swam down.

‘The water weets my tae,’ she said ;
‘The water weets my knee,
And hold up my bridle reins, sir knight,
For the sake of our Ladye.’

‘If I would help thee now,’ he said,
‘It were a deadly sin,
For I’ve sworn neir to trust a fair may’s word,
Till the water weets her chin.’

‘O, the water weets my waist,’ she said,
‘Sae does it weet my skin,
And my aching heart rins round about,
The burn maks sic a din.

‘The water is waxing deeper still,
Sae does it wax mair wide,
And aye the farther that we ride on,
Farther off is the other side.

SIR ROLAND

'O help me now, thou false, false knight,
Have pity on my youth,
For now the water jawes owre my head,
And it gurgles in my mouth.'

The knight turn'd right and round about,
All in the middle stream ;
And he stretch'd out his head to that lady,
But loudly she did scream.

'O this is Hallow-morn,' he said,
'And it is your bridal-day,
But sad would be that gay wedding,
If bridegroom and bride were away.

'And ride on, ride on, proud Margaret !
Till the water comes o'er your bree,
For the bride maun ride deep, and deeper yet,
Wha rides this ford wi' me.

'Turn round, turn round, proud Margaret !
Turn ye round, and look on me,
Thou hast killed a true knight under trust,
And his ghost now links on with thee.'

.

THE DEMON LOVER



THE DEMON LOVER

‘O WHERE have you been, my long-lost love,
This long seven years and mair ?’

‘O I ’m come to seek my former vows,
Ye granted me before.’

‘O hold your tongue of your former vows,
For they will breed sad strife ;
O hold your tongue of your former vows,
For I am become a wife.’

He turn’d him right and round about,
And the tear blinded his e’e :
‘I wad never hae trodden on Irish ground,
If it had not been for thee.

‘I might have had a king’s daughter,
Far, far beyond the sea ;
I might have had a king’s daughter,
Had it not been for love o’ thee.’

‘If ye might have had a king’s daughter,
Yersel ye had to blame ;
Ye might have taken the king’s daughter,
For ye kend that I was nane.’

THE DEMON LOVER

' O faulse are the vows o' womankind,
But fair is their faulse bodie ;
I never wad hae trodden on Irish ground,
Had it not been for love o' thee.'

' If I was to leave my husband dear,
And my two babes also,
O what have you to take me to,
If with you I should go ?'

' I have seven ships upon the sea,
The eighth brought me to land ;
With four-and-twenty bold mariners,
And music on every hand.'

She has taken up her two little babes,
Kiss'd them baith cheek and chin ;
' O fare ye weel, my ain twa babes,
For I 'll never see you again.'

She set her foot upon the ship,
No mariners could she behold ;
But the sails were o' the taffetie
And the masts o' the beaten gold

They had not sail'd a league, a league,
A league but barely three,
Until she espied his cloven foot,
And she wept right bitterlie.

THE DEMON LOVER

'O hold your tongue of your weeping,' says he,
 'Of your weeping now let me be ;
I will show you how the lilies grow
 On the banks of Italy.'

'O what hills are yon, yon pleasant hills,
 That the sun shines sweetly on ?'
'O yon are the hills of heaven,' he said,
 'Where you will never win.'

'O whaten a mountain is yon,' she said,
 'All so dreary wi' frost and snow ?'
'O yon is the mountain of hell,' he cried,
 'Where you and I will go.'

And aye when she turn'd her round about,
 Aye taller he seem'd to be ;
Until that the tops o' the gallant ship
 Nae taller were than he.

He strack the tapmast wi' his hand,
 The foremast wi' his knee ;
And he brake that gallant ship in twain,
 And sank her in the sea.

LOVE GREGOR

OR THE LASS OF LOCHROYAN



LOVE GREGOR

OR THE LASS OF LOCHROYAN

'O WHA will shoe my fu' fair foot ?
And wha will glove my hand ?
And wha will lace my middle jimp,
Wi' the new-made London band ?

'And wha will kaim my yellow hair,
Wi' the new-made silver kaim ?
And wha will father my young son,
Till Love Gregor come hame?'

'Your father will shoe your fu' fair foot,
Your mother will glove your hand ;
Your sister will lace your middle jimp
Wi' the new-made London band.

'Your brother will kaim your yellow hair,
Wi' the new-made silver kaim ;
And the king of heaven will father your bairn,
Till Love Gregor come haim.'

THE LASS OF LOCHROYAN

' But I will get a bonny boat,
And I will sail the sea,
For I maun gang to Love Gregor,
Since he canna come hame to me.'

O she has gotten a bonny boat,
And sail'd the sa't sea fame ;
She lang'd to see her ain true-love,
Since he could no' come hame.

' O row your boat, my mariners,
And bring me to the land,
For yonder I see my love's castle,
Close by the sa't sea strand.'

She has ta'en her young son in her arms,
And to the door she's gone,
And lang she's knock'd and sair she ca'd,
But answer got she none.

' O open the door, Love Gregor,' she says,
' O open, and let me in ;
For the wind blows thro' my yellow hair,
And the rain draps o'er my chin.'

' Awa, awa, ye ill woman,
You'r nae come here for good ;
You'r but some witch, or wile warlock,
Or mer-maid of the flood.'

THE LASS OF LOCHROYAN

'I am neither a witch nor a wile warlock,
Nor mer-maid of the sea,
I am Fair Annie of Rough Royal ;
O open the door to me.'

'Gin ye be Annie of Rough Royal—
And I trust ye are not she—
Now tell me some of the love-tokens
That past between you and me.'

'O dinna you mind now, Love Gregor,
When we sat at the wine,
How we changed the rings frae our fingers?
And I can show thee thine.

'O yours was good, and good eneugh,
But aye the best was mine ;
For yours was o' the good red goud,
But mine o' the dimonds fine.

'But open the door now, Love Gregor,
O open the door I pray,
For your young son that is in my arms
Will be dead ere it be day.'

'Awa, awa, ye ill woman,
For here ye shanno win in ;
Gae drown ye in the raging sea,
Or hang on the gallows-pin.'

THE LASS OF LOCHROYAN

When the cock had crawn, and day did dawn,
And the sun began to peep,
Then it raise him, Love Gregor,
And sair, sair did he weep.

'O I dream'd a dream, my mother dear,
The thoughts o' it gars me greet,
That Fair Annie of Rough Royal
Lay cauld dead at my feet.'

'Gin it be for Annie of Rough Royal
That ye make a' this din,
She stood a' last night at this door,
But I trow she wan no in.'

'O wae betide ye, ill woman,
An ill dead may ye die!
That ye woudno open the door to her,
Nor yet woud waken me.'

O he has gone down to yon shore-side,
As fast as he could fare;
He saw Fair Annie in her boat
But the wind it toss'd her sair.

And 'Hey, Annie!' and 'How, Annie!
O Annie, winna ye bide?'
But aye the mair that he cried 'Annie,'
The braider grew the tide.

THE LASS OF LOCHROYAN

And 'Hey, Annie!' and 'How, Annie!
Dear Annie, speak to me!'
But aye the louder he cried 'Annie,'
The louder roar'd the sea.

The wind blew loud, the sea grew rough,
And dash'd the boat on shore;
Fair Annie floats on the raging sea, /
But her young son raise no more.

Love Gregor tare his yellow hair,
And made a heavy moan;
Fair Annie's corpse lay at his feet,
But his bonny young son was gone.

O cherry, cherry was her cheek,
And gowden was her hair,
But clay cold were her rosey lips,
Nae spark of life was there.

And first he 's kiss'd her cherry cheek,
And neist he 's kiss'd her chin;
And saftly press'd her rosey lips,
But there was nae breath within.

'O wae betide my cruel mother,
And an ill dead may she die!
For she turn'd my true-love frae the door,
When she came sae far to me.'

THE TWA SISTERS O'
BINNORIE



THE TWA SISTERS O' BINNORIE

THERE were twa sisters sat in a bow'r
(Binnorie, O Binnorie!);
A knight cam' there, a noble wooer,
By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

He courted the eldest wi' glove and ring
(Binnorie, O Binnorie!),
But he lo'ed the youngest aboon a' thing,
By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

The eldest she was vexèd sair
(Binnorie, O Binnorie!),
And sair envied her sister fair,
By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

Upon a morning fair and clear
(Binnorie, O Binnorie!'),
She cried upon her sister dear,
By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

THE TWA SISTERS O' BINNORIE

'O sister, sister, tak' my hand '
(Binnorie, O Binnorie!),
'And let's go down to the river-strand,
By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.'

She's ta'en her by the lily hand
(Binnorie, O Binnorie!),
And down they went to the river-strand,
By the bonnie mill-dams o' Binnorie.

The youngest stood upon a stane,
(Binnorie, O Binnorie!),
The eldest cam' and push'd her in,
By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

'O sister, sister, reach your hand!'
(Binnorie, O Binnorie!)
'And ye sall be heir o' half my land'—
By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

'O sister, reach me but your glove!'
(Binnorie, O Binnorie!)
'And sweet William sall be your love'—
By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

Sometimes she sank, sometimes she swam,
(Binnorie, O Binnorie!)
Till she cam' to the mouth o' yon mill-dam,
By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

THE TWA SISTERS O' BINNORIE

Out then cam' the miller's son
(Binnorie, O Binnorie!)
And saw the fair maid soummin' in,
By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

'O father, father, draw your dam!'
(Binnorie, O Binnorie!),
'There's either a mermaid or a swan,'
By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

The miller quickly drew the dam,
(Binnorie, O Binnorie!)
And there he found a drown'd woman,
By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

Round about her middle sma'
(Binnorie, O Binnorie!)
There went a gouden girdle bra',
By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

All amang her yellow hair
(Binnorie, O Binnorie!)
A string o' pearls was twisted rare,
By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

On her fingers lily-white
(Binnorie, O Binnorie!)
The jewel-rings were shining bright,
By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

THE TWA SISTERS O' BINNORIE

And by there cam' a harper fine,
(Binnorie, O Binnorie!)
Harpèd to nobles when they dine,
By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

And when he look'd that lady on,
(Binnorie, O Binnorie!)
He sigh'd and made a heavy moan,
By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

He's ta'en three locks o' her yellow hair,
(Binnorie, O Binnorie!)
And wi' them strung his harp sae rare,
By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

He went into her father's hall,
(Binnorie, O Binnorie!)
And play'd his harp before them all,
By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

And sune the harp sang loud and clear,
(Binnorie, O Binnorie!)
'Fareweel, my father and mither dear!'
By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

And neist when the harp began to sing,
(Binnorie, O Binnorie!)
'Twas 'Fareweel, sweetheart!' said the string,
By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.

THE TWA SISTERS O' BINNORIE

And then as plain as plain could be,
(Binnorie, O Binnorie!)
' There sits my sister wha drownèd me
By the bonny mill-dams o' Binnorie.'

HELEN OF KIRKCONNEL





HELEN OF KIRKCONNEL

I WISH I were where Helen lies !
Night and day on me she cries ;
O that I were where Helen lies,
On fair Kirkconnel Lee !

Curst be the heart that thought the thought,
And curst the hand that fired the shot,
When in my arms burd Helen dropt,
And died to succour me !

O thinkna ye my heart was sair,
When my love dropt down and spak nae mair !
There did she swoon wi' meikle care,
On fair Kirkconnel Lee.

As I went down the water side,
None but my foe to be my guide,
None but my foe to be my guide,
On fair Kirkconnel Lee.

I lighted down, my sword did draw,
I hack'd him into pieces sma',
I hack'd him into pieces sma',
For her sake that died for me.

HELEN OF KIRKCONNEL

O Helen fair, beyond compare!
I'll make a garland of thy hair,
Shall bind my heart for evermair,
Until the day I die!

O that I were where Helen lies!
Night and day on me she cries;
Out of my bed she bids me rise,
Says, 'Haste, and come to me!'

O Helen fair! O Helen chaste!
If I were with thee I were blest,
Where thou lies low, and takes thy rest,
On fair Kirkconnel Lee.

I wish my grave were growing green,
A winding-sheet drawn ower my een,
And I in Helen's arms lying,
On fair Kirkconnel Lee.

I wish I were where Helen lies!
Night and day on me she cries,
And I am weary of the skies,
For her sake that died for me.

THE TWA CORBIES



THE TWA CORBIES

As I was walking all alane,
I heard twa corbies making a mane :
The tane unto the t'other say,
'Whar sall we gang and dine the day?'

'In behint yon auld fail dyke
I wot there lies a new-slain knight ;
And naebody kens that he lies there
But his hawk, his hound, and his lady fair.

'His hound is to the hunting gane,
His hawk to fetch the wild-fowl hame,
His lady's ta'en another mate,
So we may make our dinner sweet.

'Ye'll sit on his white hause-bane,
And I'll pike out his bonny blue e'en ;
Wi' ae lock o' his gowden hair
We'll theek our nest when it grows bare.

'Mony a one for him makes mane,
But nane sall ken whare he is gane,
O'er his white banes, when they are bare,
The wind sall blaw for evermair.'

YOU

EDOM O' GORDON



EDOM O' GORDON

It fell about the Martinmas,
When the wind blew shrill and cauld,
Said Edom o' Gordon to his men,
'We maun draw to a hauld.

'And whatna hauld sall we draw to,
My merrie-men and me?
We will gae to the house o' the Rodes,
To see that fair ladye.'

The lady stood on her castle wa',
Beheld baith dale and down ;
There she was ware of a host of men
Were riding towards the town.

'O see ye not, my merry men a',
O see ye not what I see ?
Methinks I see a host of men ;
I marvel what they be.'

She ween'd it had been her ain dear lord,
As he cam' riding hame ;
It was the traitor, Edom o' Gordon,
Wha reck'd nor sin nor shame.

EDOM O' GORDON

She had nae sooner buskit hersell,
And putten on her gown,
Till Edom o' Gordon an' his men
Were round about the town.

They had nae sooner supper set,
Nae sooner said the grace,
But Edom o' Gordon an' his men
Were light about the place.

The lady ran to her tower-head,
As fast as she could dri'e,
To see if by her fair speeches
She could wi' him agree.

'Come doun to me, ye lady gay,
Come doun, come doun to me ;
This night sall ye lie within mine arms,
The morn my bride sall be.'

'I winna come down, ye fause Gordon,
I winna come down to thee ;
I winna forsake my ain dear lord,—
That is sae far fra me.'

'Gie owre your house, ye lady fair,
Gie owre your house to me ;
Or I sall burn yoursell therein,
But and your babies three.'

EDOM O' GORDON

' I winna gie owre, ye fause Gordon,
To nae sic traitor as thee ;
And if ye burn my ain dear babes,
My lord sall mak' ye dree.

' But reach my pistol, Glaud, my man,
And charge ye weel my gun ;
For, but if I pierce that bluidy butcher,
We a' shall be undone !'

She stood upon the castle wa',
And let twa bullets flee :
She miss'd that bluidy butcher's heart,
And only razed his knee.

' Set fire to the house !' quo' the fause Gordon,
All wude wi' dule and ire :
' Fause ladye, ye sall rue that shot
As ye burn in the fire !'

' Wae worth, wae worth ye, Jock, my man !
I paid ye weel your fee ;
Why pu' ye out the grund-wa' stane,
Lets in the reek to me ?

' And e'en wae worth ye, Jock, my man !
I paid ye weel your hire ;
Why pu' ye out the grund-wa' stane,
To me lets in the fire ?'

EDOM O' GORDON

'Ye paid me weel my hire, ladye,
Ye paid me weel my fee :
But now I'm Edom o' Gordon's man,—
Maun either do or die.'

O then bespake her youngest son,
Sat on the nourice' knee :
Says, 'Mither dear, gie owre this house,
For the reek it smothers me.

'I wad gie a' my goud, my bairn,
Sae wad I a' my fee,
For ae blast o' the western wind,
To blaw the reek frae thee!'

O then bespake her daughter dear,—
She was baith jimp and sma' :
'O row me in a pair o' sheets,
An' tow me owre the wa'.'

They row'd her in a pair o' sheets,
And tow'd her owre the wa' ;
But on the point o' Gordon's spear
She gat a deadly fa'.

O bonnie, bonnie was her mouth,
And cherry were her cheeks,
And clear, clear was her yellow hair,
Whereon the red blood dreeps.

EDOM O' GORDON

Then wi' his spear he turn'd her owre ;
O gin her face was wan !
He said, ' Ye are the first that e'er
I wish'd alive again.'

He turn'd her owre and owre again,
O gin her skin was white !
' I might hae spared that bonnie face
To hae been some man's delight.

' Busk and boun, my merrie-men a',
For ill dooms I do guess ;—
I cannot look on that bonnie face
As it lies on the grass.'

' Wha looks to freits, my master dear,
It's freits will follow them ;
Let it ne'er be said that Edom o' Gordon
Was dauntit by a dame.'

But when the ladye saw the fire
Come flaming owre her head,
She wept, and kiss'd her children twain,
Says, ' Bairns, we been but dead.'

The Gordon then his bugle blew,
And said, ' Awa', awa' !
This house o' the Rodes is a' in a flame ;
I hold it time to ga'.'

EDOM O' GORDON

O then bespied her ain dear lord,
As he came owre the lea ;
He saw his castle a' in a lowe,
Sae far as he could see.

'Put on, put on, my wighty men,
As fast as ye can dri'e!
For he that 's hindmost o' the thrang
Sall ne'er get gude o' me!'

Then some they rade, and some they ran,
Fu' fast out-owre the bent ;
But ere the foremost could win up,
Baith lady and babes were brent.

He wrang his hands, he rent his hair,
And wept in tearfu' mood ;
'Ah, traitors ! for this cruel deed,
Ye shall weep tears of blude.'

And after the Gordon he is gane,
Sae fast as he might dri'e ;
And soon i' the Gordon's foul heart's blude
He's wroken his fair ladye.

THE DOUGLAS TRAGEDY



THE DOUGLAS TRAGEDY

'Rise up, rise up now, Lord Douglas,' she says,
 'And put on your armour so bright ;
Let it never be said, that a daughter of thine
 Was married to a lord under night.

'Rise up, rise up, my seven bold sons,
 And put on your armour so bright ;
And take better care of your youngest sister,
 For your eldest's awa the last night !'

He's mounted her on a milk-white steed,
 And himself on a dapple grey,
With a bugelet horn hung down by his side,
 And lightly they rode away.

Lord William lookit o'er his left shoulder,
 To see what he could see,
And there he spy'd her seven brethren bold
 Come riding over the lee.

'Light down, light down, Lady Marg'ret,' he said,
 'And hold my steed in your hand,
Until that against your seven brethren bold,
 And your father, I mak a stand.'

THE DOUGLAS TRAGEDY

She held his steed in her milk-white hand,
And never shed one tear,
Until that she saw her seven brethren fa',
And her father hard fighting, who loved her so dear.

'O hold your hand, Lord William!' she said,
'For your strokes they are wondrous sair;
True lovers I can get many a ane,
But a father I can never get mair.'

O she's ta'en out her handkerchief,
It was o' the holland sae fine,
And aye she dighted her father's bloody wounds,
That were redder than the wine.

'O chuse, O chuse, Lady Marg'ret,' he said,
'O whether will ye gang or bide?'
'I'll gang, I'll gang, Lord William,' she said,
'For ye have left me nae other guide.'

He's lifted her on a milk-white steed,
And himself on a dapple grey,
With a bugelet horn hung down by his side,
And slowly they baith rade away.

O they rade on, and on they rade,
And a' by the light of the moon,
Until they came to yon wan water,
And there they lighted down.

THE DOUGLAS TRAGEDY

They lighted down to tak' a drink
Of the spring that ran sae clear :
And down the stream ran his gude heart's blood,
And sair she gan to fear.

'Hold up, hold up, Lord William,' she says,
'For I fear that you are slain !'
'Tis naething but the shadow of my scarlet cloak,
That shines in the water sae plain.'

O they rade on, and on they rade,
And a' by the light of the moon,
Until they cam' to his mother's ha' door.
And there they lighted down.

'Get up, get up, lady mother,' he says,
'Get up, and let me in !—
Get up, get up, lady mother,' he says,
'For this night my fair ladye I've win.

'O mak' my bed, lady mother,' he says,
'O mak' it braid and deep !
And lay Lady Marg'ret close at my back,
And the sounder I will sleep.'

Lord William was dead lang ere midnight,
Lady Marg'ret lang ere day—
And all true lovers that go thegither,
May they have mair luck than they !

THE DOUGLAS TRAGEDY

Lord William was buried in St. Mary's kirk,
Lady Margaret in Mary's quire ;
Out o' the lady's grave grew a bonny red rose,
And out o' the knight's a brier.

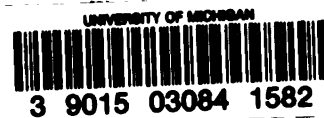
And they twa met, and they twa plat,
And fain they wad be near ;
And a' the warld might ken right weel,
They were twa lovers dear.

But by and rade the Black Douglas,
And wow but he was rough !
For he pull'd up the bonny brier,
An flang't in St. Mary's Loch.

GLOSSARY

GLOSSARY

<i>Aboon</i>	.	.	.	.	above
<i>Ask</i>	.	.	.	.	newt
<i>Birk</i>	.	.	.	.	birch
<i>Blin</i>	.	.	.	.	stop
<i>Boun</i>	.	.	.	.	ready
<i>Bree</i>	.	.	.	.	brow
<i>Burd</i>	.	.	.	.	lady, damsel
<i>Burd-alane</i>	.	.	.	.	alone: 'a term used to denote one who is the only child left in the family.'— <i>Jamieson</i> .
<i>Buskit</i>	.	.	.	.	made ready
<i>Carline</i>	.	.	.	.	old woman
<i>Carp</i>	.	.	.	.	sing
<i>Channerin'</i>	.	.	.	.	fretting
<i>Corbies</i>	.	.	.	.	ravens
<i>Daunton</i>	.	.	.	.	daunt
<i>Dighted</i>	placed ; p. 80, dressed
<i>Dought</i>	could
<i>Dree</i>	suffer
<i>Dule</i>	sorrow, pain
<i>E'e</i>	eye
<i>Even (cloth)</i>	fine



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